LADYLOVE

... By ...

MARTHA M'CULLOCH-WILLIAMS

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As Jack Vanston stepped through the French window into the library at Cresswell he made half a motion to turn back. Ladylove was crying hard, her head buried in her folded arms on the big library table. Aunt Nan sat a little way off, frowning, yet beaming over a letter. She it was who caught sight of Jack and called to him with little excited breaks between her words:

"Don't go away, Mr. Vanston. You must help me make this headstrong child listen to reason."

"If she's badly in need of discipline suppose you let me take her for a walk this morning?" Jack said, pulling a rebellious curl that strayed down over Ladylove's neck. "She told me yesterday she hated me."

Miss Nancy shook her head. "I cannot permit the walk—now." She put such emphasis on the last word Jack could not choose but ask, "Why?"

"Oh, Ja-ck!" Ladylove wailed, sitting up, but keeping her face hidden. "It's because she wants me to marry that fat, pig eyed Sandy Corlew. He—he has written to her—proposing—fancy proposing that way"—

"I at least appreciate dear Sandy's fine deference to your natural guardian," Miss Nancy said, sitting a thought straighter and caressing the letter with two fingers. Then, in answer to the question of Jack's eyes, she went on: "Of course Ladylove will accept. She came here to establish herself"—

"I didn't! It was just because I thought you were lonely and wanted me—and there were so many of us at home one could well be spared." Ladylove broke in, "and I had rather go back to daddy and the pigs and the chickens and the children and have only calico frocks than marry this—this oaf."

She was standing at the last word, one little foot stamping hard as she spoke. Jack dared not look straight at her—if he did he knew he should catch her in his arms and comfort her. That would ruin everything. It was clearly a case for diplomacy. He said soothingly to Ladylove, "Hush, naughty girl!" Then to Aunt Nancy: "I agree with you, Miss Cresswell. Sandy Corlew is a fine, solid fellow, who may always be depended on to do the right thing. But please let me see his letter—I'm not asking out of impertinent curiosity," as he saw denial in her face. "Do believe that! I—I have an idea—that—that you may not have understood quite what he meant."

Jack's breath came fast as he said it. He was by turns hot and cold. But desperate cases require desperate audacities. He bent toward Miss Nancy and half forcibly took the letter, read it through twice, folded it, read it again, then stood with it in his hand, the model of one impelled to speak, yet loath to obey the impulse. Miss Nancy, watching him as a bird watches a snake, at last snapped out: "Well, what's the matter? Do you find anything strange or startling in the fact that a gentleman has the courage and decency to say outright he wants to marry my niece?"

"I do not," Jack said; then in a constrained voice: "But—forgive me, Miss Nancy—has he said so? I think not."

"Why, bless and save us! Are you crazy?" Miss Cresswell demanded.

"Not a bit of it!" Jack retorted stoutly. "Only that you have misunderstood. Here is all the first page about how he has admired you all his life and now that he has reached man's estate 'hopes for a closer alliance.' And then with a manly courage most admirable he sums up, 'My heart is set on marrying the one woman in the world for me—Miss Nancy Walton Cresswell.' Ladylove is Nancy Walton Cresswell on the family register, but whoever heard her called so anywhere else?"

"Oh, you can't mean that! It would be too ridiculous," Miss Cresswell said, but as she said it she turned away her head to hide the blush that spread even to her round white chin. Ladylove sprang at her like a mad thing crying out: 'It's truth, Auntie Nan! It must be true. Sandy means you; nobody else. And you'll take him, and I'll adore my Uncle Sandy. He's only nicely fat after all, and I'm sure a pig's eyes can be kind and funny"—

"Ladylove, you forget yourself," Jack said, his voice heavy with reproof. Then to Miss Cresswell: "Honestly I cannot doubt that Sandy meant you. That was why I insisted upon seeing the letter. I had heard him say things which made me sure you misunderstood, and I did not want you to make a grave mistake."

"Why, the boy is ten years younger than I am," Miss Cresswell said weakly, stealing a glance at herself in the mantel glass.

"And looks five years older at the very least," Jack said. "That is one advantage of being so—ahem—well, so finely built. At least think it over. Tell him you'll take a week to consider his proposal"—

"You don't think I could be so indelicate as to accept—I mean to say either yes or no—under a fortnight," Miss Cresswell said. "I'll write to Sandy that I must consult my brother and shall possibly give him a definite answer at the end of a fortnight."

With that she clutched the letter and vanished. The door had hardly shut behind her when Jack had Ladylove tight in his arms and was saying to the curls on the top of her head: "Honey girl, would you believe I sat up two full nights concocting that epistle for the good fat witted Sandy? Even at the last I was afraid he'd see through it, although truly it is a document you can read pretty well any way you choose. My heart was in my mouth until Aunty Nan took the bait. Now we two have plain sailing. Before the fortnight is up we can be"—

"What?" Ladylove asked breathlessly, freeing herself and standing in front of him on tiptoe. He caught both her hands and made her a reverence, saying softly: "Happy and married. My governor sailed for home three days back. Just let him get here, and I'll show the gossips I'm no such bad match for you as they have tried to make me out. He meant to stay away another year, but I cabled him how my life's happiness was at stake. Oh, I didn't doubt you, not the least. I knew you'd be equal to love in a cottage. It is our friendly enemies I wanted to confound."

"I'm wondering," Ladylove said in an almost awestruck whisper, "what Aunt Nan's answer will be."

"I hope yes, for Sandy's sake," Jack said. "But one can never tell what is going to happen when one man proposes as another man disposes."

* * * * * * *

The gossips of Creston were duly confounded. Jack married Ladylove, with Aunt Nan's beaming approval, the day before Sandy Corlew's probation ended. Such a piece of news, of course, ran through the country life wildfire. Sandy heard it about sundown and rode straight and hard to Cresswell. He found Miss Cresswell upon the porch there, a figure of graciously mature womanhood, wonderfully enchanting in the softening dusk. In spite of feeling that he had been fooled and played with, Sandy could not speak even gently when he asked, "What's all this cock and bull story of Ladylove marrying that artist chap Vanston and going off with him in a coach and four?"

"Oh, it's a real romance, a beautiful one!" Miss Cresswell said, rising and giving him her hand. She did it half shyly, as though fearing it might be detained. It was a very white hand, plump and dimpled as a baby's. Sandy held it between both his own big palms, while the owner of it ran on: "You see it was love at first sight with Jack and Ladylove, but I had to be cool to him because he was strange. Not a soul we knew had ever heard of him. He understood and really acted very well; waited until his father came to speak up for him. Then there was no withstanding them. I had to let them marry offhand"—

"I think you might have at least told me," Sandy said, half resentfully.

Miss Cresswell blushed—blushed unmistakably and said: "There were reasons against it. I—you see, I did not quite know my own mind. Besides it might have seemed to you—well, precipitate"—

"No such thing," Sandy said stoutly. Even through his denseness he began to see how the land lay. He began to see, too, how he could save his vanity from smart. Miss Cresswell was rich and handsome and kind. At the worst she could but refuse him.

"Now I am here, tell me you'll marry me Christmas," he went on masterfully. Miss Cresswell said nothing, only let him take her in his arms.

Five minutes later she whispered softly: "You owe Jack something Sandy—until he read your letter I thought you wanted Ladylove."

"Oh, Jack is a wise guy!" Sandy said, with the accent of conviction.

The Man Who Knew It All.

A Sixth avenue groceryman's boy appeared on the curb with a rat trap in his hand. Twenty pedestrians stopped at once and three dogs barked and leaped at the prisoner.

"Get out in the street!" shouted a voice.

"Give that rat a show!" added a second.

"Hold on till I get my dog!" piped a boy.

"Say, bub," interposed a fat man with a cane as he pushed his way into the crowd, "have you had any experience with rats? There's only one way to handle 'em. Let me take the trap."

With bad grace the boy surrendered it, and while some one held the fat man's cane he held the trap high over the street. When the spring door was opened six or seven dogs were waiting, and the rat didn't like the looks of things. He sprang from the door, twisted to the top of the trap and then jumped to the fat man's shoulder.

The crowd noisily fell back. The fat man yelled. The dogs butted in. One dog got the rat and four dogs got the fat man's legs. When that gentleman arose, his silk hat ruined, he demanded his cane. The holder had disappeared.

"Rats!" shouted the crowd.

And the fat man steamed fussily down the avenue.—New York Press.

A Tale of a Hated Dish.

There is a charming story told of the great French painter Corot. Being hospitable he frequently assembled his friends to dinner, and a dish of haddock and potatoes, which everybody hated, invariably followed the soup.

The friends, who thought Corot partial to the dish, always gave it when he dined with them. At last, in reply to the painter's query, they admitted that they detested the dish, but supposed he liked it.

Corot was grinning broadly. "My dear fellow, if you only knew how I hate the sight of it even. But Adele, my cook, simply adores haddock and potatoes. And it is no good—I dare not go against her wishes. It is as much as my place is worth. Not for worlds would my awe of Adele induce me to undeceive her as regards the value I attach to this one particular article of diet."

And for the sake of Adele this little group of great painters had for thirty years been eating a dish they could none of them bear.

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BURIAL CUSTOMS.

The Various Methods Used in the Disposal of the Dead.

The disposal of the dead among civilized nations has usually consisted of one of the following three ways: Firstly, of closing up the body in earth or stone; secondly, of burning the body and committing to earth the ashes, and, thirdly, the embalming of the body. The earliest form of interment of which we have any account was that of the paleolithic cave dwellers, who buried their dead in natural grottoes and crevices in the rock similar to those in which they had lived.

When we come to the later stone age we find that the people throughout Europe buried in chambered barrows and cairns. Next comes the bronze age, with its changes, and among others the burial of the dead. The chambered barrows passed away, and in their places barrows were frequently used without chambers, and cemeteries of stone cists set in the ground were largely employed. Frequently a natural eminence of sand or gravel was the place assigned for burial, and around it were circles of standing stones. During these prehistoric times cremation was also practiced side by side with the simple interments of the people. In pagan times it was customary, whether the dead were buried with or without cremation, to put in their graves such articles as urns or vessels of clay, bronze, gold or glass, clothing, personal ornaments, implements and weapons of warfare.

Cremation was largely abolished when Christianity spread over the country, and the interment of grave goods was restricted to kings and priests, who continued to be buried in their royal and sacerdotal robes and with their insignia of office.

Down to the tenth century cremation was customary among the tribes located along the Volga. Here also human sacrifices in honor of the dead prevailed. Records of eyewitnesses of the horrible ceremonies have come down to us. Charlemagne prohibited this usage among the conquered Saxons under pain of death. In India the living widow was in many instances down to 1829 burned with the corpse of her husband.

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(Chancery A—294.)

SHERIFF'S SALE.—In Chancery of New Jersey. Between Sarah Rosenthal, complainant, and Joseph Reinheimer et ux et al., defendants. Fi. fa., for sale of mortgaged premises.

By virtue of the above stated writ of fieri facias, to me directed, I shall expose for sale by public vendue, at the Court House in Newark, on Tuesday, the twenty-second day of December, next, at two o'clock P. M., all that tract or parcel of land and premises situate, lying and being in the town of Bloomfield, Essex County, New Jersey.

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November 16, 1903.

WILLIAM C. NICOLL, Sheriff.
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